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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 OTTAWA 001560

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAN AND G/TIP (BARBARA FLECK)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SMIG](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA STRIVING TO COMBAT TIP

REF: A. VANCOUVER 288

[1](#)B. OTTAWA 1072

[1](#)C. OTTAWA 1546

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Canada has an active inter-agency working group to combat trafficking in persons, as well as a variety of NGO efforts. More comprehensive research and statistics, a national action plan, greater co-ordination among national and provincial government agencies and NGOs, and greater investment in victim services would improve overall anti-TIP performance. One Conservative Member of Parliament has made TIP a top legislative and political priority. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) G/TIP official Barbara Fleck visited Ottawa and Toronto during the week of December 8 for consultations with Canadian officials about Canada's ongoing efforts to combat trafficking in persons and how better to improve its performance. (Septel will cover discussions and anti-TIP efforts in Toronto.)

INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP

[1](#)3. (SBU) A federal Interdepartmental Working Group on Trafficking in Persons (IWGTIP), which the Departments of Justice and Public Safety co-chair, shares information among its members on a regular basis and meets at least twice per year. (IWGTIP last met in spring 2008 and will meet again in December.) IWGTIP coordinates the anti-TIP work of 17 federal departments and agencies: the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA); Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS); Department of Citizenship and Immigration; the Financial Transactions Reports Analysis Centre (FINTRAC); Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT); Department of Health; Department of Canadian Heritage; Department of Human Resources and Skills Development; Department of Indian and Northern Affairs; Department of Justice; Passport Canada agency; Privy Council Office; Department of Public Safety; Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP); Statistics Canada agency; and, Status of Women agency.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Representatives from the RCMP, CBSA, and FINTRAC reported excellent cross-border working relationships with U.S. law enforcement agencies, including two ongoing investigations of potential human trafficking rings operating in Western Canada. The RCMP also conducts TIP training workshops across Canada for approximately 150 law enforcement, border, and immigration officials per month, and has invited ICE special agents to conduct some workshops. IWGTIP officials downplayed expectations of an increase in trafficking during the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games, contrary to the views of some NGOs. The RCMP has nonetheless provided training in trafficking awareness to more than 260 law enforcement officers in preparation for the 2010 Games. The RCMP has six Human Trafficking Awareness Coordinators nationwide working with NGOs, social services agencies, and local communities.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Public Safety Canada manages an ongoing public education initiative including posters and other education materials. Public

Safety recently signed an agreement to partner with the Canadian Crime Stoppers Association to use its toll-free telephone hotline, and plans to train Crime Stoppers hotline operators to identify potential TIP cases. The roll-out of the new partnership will include a poster, video, radio and print advertising campaign (ref B).

GETTING THE RIGHT NUMBERS

¶6. (SBU) Many observers view a lack of reliable statistical data and information sharing as major challenges to more effective anti-TIP activities. For example, trafficking victims who make asylum claims are counted as refugee applicants and are unlikely to appear as trafficking victims in official statistics. Statistics Canada is currently conducting a feasibility study, due for completion in April 2009, for nationwide collection of anti-trafficking case data and statistics. Dr. Marlene Dalley of RCMP's National Missing Children Services indicated that reliable data relating to child trafficking in Canada remains difficult to gather. She pointed to two particularly vulnerable populations of children: Canada's estimated 55,000 runaways; and, aboriginal minors who fall victim to substance abuse, poverty, and homelessness. Dalley commented that it was unclear how many of these children may be victims of trafficking, mostly because some police officers do not identify many TIP cases on the ground.

NGO VIEWS

¶7. (SBU) In separate meetings, representatives of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and Persons Against the Crime

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of Trafficking in Humans (PACT-Ottawa) insisted that Canada remains a source, destination, and transit country for trafficking in persons, even though the Canadian government does not view itself as a major "source" country for domestic human trafficking. In addition to international trafficking through Canada's major cities, they reported organized internal flows of women and girls to Western Canada to provide oil and gas workers with commercial sex services. Girls and children also move from aboriginal communities in northern Canada to work in the commercial sex sector in urban areas. According to the NGOs, the problem of internal trafficking of aboriginal girls and children is "huge." In recent decades, over 500 aboriginal women have been murdered or gone missing; NWAC believes some of these women likely were victims of trafficking. The Canadian government has partnered with NWAC on a five-year "Sisters in Spirit" initiative (2005-2010) to address violence in aboriginal communities and the high rates of missing and murdered aboriginal women (ref C). According to the NGOs, there is still a pressing need for more statistical research "across the board" to define the scale of the problem and form the basis for future advocacy and action.

VICTIM SUPPORT: A WEAK LINK

¶8. (SBU) NWAC and PACT-Ottawa officials also identified improved victim services and increased shelter capacity as additional prerequisites for more effective law enforcement action. They expressed concern that Canada's practice of detaining foreign trafficking victims in immigration detention centers -- rather than in shelters where they can receive social and medical support -- deters victims from seeking assistance. (Note: There are immigration detention facilities in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. End note.) The lack of shelters and victims' services may also be a factor in the low demand for Temporary Residence Permits (TRPs) for trafficked victims; reportedly, only 31 TRPs (including renewals) have been issued since May 2006. Referrals and victims' services operate largely on an ad hoc basis; lack of documentation for trafficked persons makes it more likely that these victims could "fall through the cracks," mostly because TIP victims do not easily meet the definitional requirements for being a victim of domestic violence (which provides easier access to government

assistance).

¶9. (SBU) Six shelters operate currently in Ottawa, all provincially funded, to serve victims of domestic violence and their children. Immigrant Women Services Ottawa provides interpretation services for female victims unable to communicate in English or French. While Ottawa shelter providers cited incidents of suspected trafficking cases among immigrant women and aboriginal youth, they added that they have never been formally trained to identify victims of trafficking, and were eager to learn more about TIP. (Poloff subsequently introduced the shelter management to several NGO activists eager to raise awareness of TIP.) Shelter staff underlined the need for facilities exclusively for single women, whose challenges, such as trauma and addictions, are often difficult to address in an environment with children. Interval House, an Ottawa shelter, hopes to build a facility for single women if it can attract sufficient funds; it currently has only four beds -- which are always full -- for women without children.

SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT

¶10. (SBU) MP Joy Smith (Conservative-Winnipeg), a vocal proponent of Q10. (SBU) MP Joy Smith (Conservative-Winnipeg), a vocal proponent of strengthened anti-trafficking measures, has called on the government to adopt a national action plan to combat trafficking. She also advocates a comprehensive strategy combining all levels of government, law enforcement, and NGOs to fight TIP, incorporating increased enforcement of existing anti-trafficking laws, greater law enforcement training, deeper linkages with the NGO community, support for victim shelters and rehabilitation services, and more educational and prevention efforts. Smith has suggested creation of a new position of Minister of State for Trafficking In Persons, and is encouraging fellow parliamentarians to place TIP higher on the government's justice agenda.

¶11. (SBU) Smith said that she intends to introduce at least two private member bills in the 2009 legislative session addressing trafficking: one would establish mandatory minimum sentencing for commercial sexual exploitation of persons younger than age 18; and the second would strengthen notification requirements when sexual predators travel abroad. Smith, whose son is an RCMP officer, commented that law enforcement agents were still not fully aware of the scope or nature of trafficking, and that the number of prosecutions remained far lower than it should be. British Columbia is currently the only province to have established an office dedicated to combating trafficking (ref A). Smith praised the Harper government's efforts to reduce issuance of "exotic dancer"

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visas -- which likely had previously been used to traffic foreign women into Canada's sex trade -- from a past high of several hundred to only two or three per year now. Smith noted that the adult entertainment industry had already threatened a legal challenge to the government's reduction of visas in this category.

¶12. (U) G/TIP has cleared this cable.

WILKINS